

{ the covington story project }

a collection of stories & poems shared by covington's youth



The Center
for Great
Neighborhoods

Introduction to the Covington Story Project

This book is the first publication of the Covington Story Project, a movement to share stories of Covington's young people. Featured here are seven high school students who are members of the Covington Youth Commission (CYC). The CYC works to get youth involved in their community by providing opportunities to participate in service projects and by sponsoring a mini-grants program for youth groups with ideas for projects to improve their community.

This publication celebrates the Covington Bicentennial by collecting stories from youth reflecting on their past, describing their present, and looking to their future in the context of growing up and living in Covington. They have used the art of photography to supplement their stories of the city.

Also included in this book are poems from five students at John G. Carlisle. These 4th and 5th graders participated in an after-school program led by The Center for Great Neighborhoods called BLOCK (Born Leaders of Covington, Kentucky). They developed leadership skills by exploring their neighborhoods and considering how they could make a positive difference in them. In the style of Kentucky's poet laureate, George Ella Lyon, they have written poems called, "Where I'm From."

Many thanks for this project go to Roger Auge, who had the vision for the Covington Story Project, and served as the writing instructor. Thanks also to local photographers, Katie Woodring and Rudy Harris, who helped the students with their photographs.

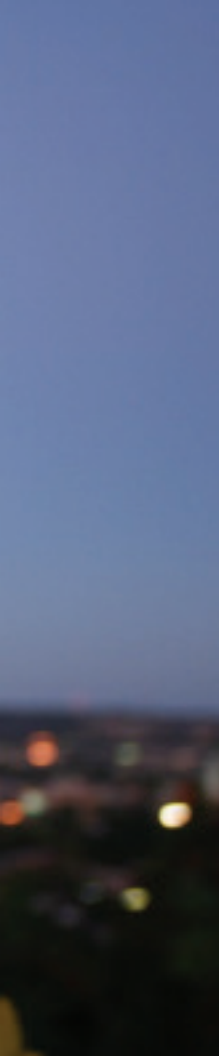
Lastly, this project would not have been possible without a Creative Community Grant from The Center for Great Neighborhoods. These grants are made possible because of the generous financial support of the Kresge Foundation.

Jenni Miller-Francis

Director of Education

The Center for Great Neighborhoods





This city full of busy roads, old houses, bright and colorful lights
And buildings of great heights
Also has white clouds, tall and leafy trees, the brightest sun
And as many flowers as great hours

MAGGIE BROCKHOFF

XXXXX, XXXXXXXX

The aroma of the musty sweat still lingers throughout the air from the brutal game that was played the night before. The streaks of paint, viciously abused but proud to still be intact, lay stagnant on the field waiting for nature to take its course and grow over it. I sit there reminiscing on the events that I have witnessed there from my youth -- from watching the older kids exhaust themselves playing the game they loved to me slowly transforming to that person I idolized. The photo that I captured encapsulates the childhood dreams that I acquired throughout my educational career and has made an incredible impact on my life today.

ALEX VANCINI

Senior, Holmes High School



“The aroma of the musty sweat
still lingers
throughout the air...”



“...I would spend
countless hours outside
simply staring and exploring the
vast wooded area around my house.”

Growing up in Covington, fall quickly became my favorite season. As the temperatures became colder, life began to change. We began to pack away our swim trunks, and replace them with jeans and sweaters. The leaves would turn into vibrant shades of orange, red, and yellow. The kids would return to school, and life began to finally settle down from the hectic attitude of the summer. Life in Covington would begin to fall into a schedule, as we headed towards the winter months, with the light-hearted anticipation of the holidays.

As a child, I had always loved the stunning display of colors presented to me during the autumn months, I would spend countless hours outside simply staring and exploring the vast wooded area around my house.

I would rake bountiful piles of leaves in an attempt to completely immerse myself into the colors of this time. In my house the feeling of autumn was completed by the smell of sweet pumpkin and cinnamon candles in the kitchen. The smells outside only added to the warmth, and soon the sunsets began to reflect the same intensity of hue that the trees created.

As I left my house to explore the city, the same impact inviting atmosphere was present throughout the city. The colors were present on every street, and in every home. One place in particular signified the transition to fall more than anyplace else, Pioneer Park. I would spend hours with my mom walking the trails, with the sunlight against my back and the cool air brushing against my face. The trails would wind through the woods covered in the fallen leaves, and the sound of the creek could be heard no matter where I was. I heard the laughs of the children as they played in the dog park, or on the playground. I, too, would laugh with my mother, commenting on the beauty of the park or on what had happened at school that week. As I walked, the wildlife would become more and more prevalent, I could see the ducks swimming down the creek, and the deer running the woods. Eventually, the path we were on would take us across a bridge. We would look into the water, and we could see the fish, plants, and rocks through the lightly rushing water. Occasionally, I would see leaves float by, and it is the memory of these leaves that remind me more of my childhood than anything else. Spending this time with my mom in the middle of nature is my favorite memory of my childhood, and the one aspect for my childhood that I will always remember.

JAMES KRAUTH
XXXXX, XXXXXXXX



“It is a
symbol of unification
for the people that live here,”

Every year around Labor Day, WEBN hosts a fireworks show on the Ohio River. People from all over Covington attend it, and bring their family and friends. The fireworks show is free, and has been going on since 1977. The fireworks display is so large and extravagant, that it can be seen from many landmarks in Covington, even ones that are a few miles away. The show has been a part of many Covington citizens' lives. Despite the changing landscape of Covington and our society, it still remains. Many people have gone to the show every year since they were born, and I hope that the show will be here for the next 200 years. It is a symbol of unification for the people that live here, and helps take people's minds off of their worries. The unity and wonder that the community feels, that is honestly my favorite part of the experience. There aren't many other times during the year that our community actually feels that unified, and it is a wonderful feeling.

CHASE DIETZ
XXXXXX, XXXXXXXX

As an eight year old child of a district employee, I never realized how big of an impact the Covington Independent School District would have on my future. Now as a 17 year old intern in the Board of Education office, I have learned to appreciate the education that I was so fortunate to receive. When I first stepped foot into the Covington Board of Education when I was eight years old I was fortunate enough to meet a lady by the name of Jena Meehan. She has helped me realize how important education is to the rest of my life. She was also there to help me prepare and gain a whole new level of respect for the things that go on behind the scenes of every big event that our district holds and even the major changes that our district would encounter. One major change during my school career was, when they decided to move the middle school up to the high school onto the Holmes campus. Many were skeptical of this move, but coming from the first sixth grade class to enter Holmes Middle School I believe that being there to grow to know the campus itself helped me to feel more comfortable when I entered the high school itself. At first I was nervous because I was going to be on the same campus as “the big kids.” I was not sure what to expect. As I began my journey up the many stairs of the middle school, I saw the bright colors of the freshly painted hallways and realized that I was ready for this big change. All thanks to the Covington Independent Public Schools. This school district has supported its students to the best of its abilities and has strived to make it a place where education is valued in a whole new light. As a student I have grown to love and respect each and every change this school district has made because I know that Mr. Garrison and his associates have the students’ best interests in mind.

KATLIN ASHCRAFT

XXXXX, XXXXXXX



“...I was ready for this
big change.”

“This is a place
of unscathed beauty...”



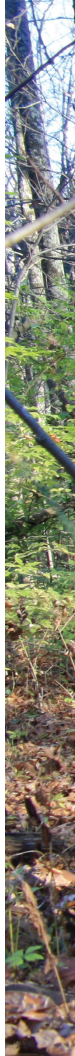
This is a place of unscathed beauty, one of the few left in Covington. The soft dirt on the ground, the murky yet beautiful water, and the thickness of the trees and their leaves ranging in color from a light fern green to a deep, dark emerald. The Licking River Trail is one of the most unutilized places of serenity in our city. While it is usually host to the Holmes High School Cross Country invitational, that event hasn't been held the past few years. I only see the occasional walker or runner on this trail in my frequent visits. This trail is one of my favorite places to go, whether for a run, a walk, or just to chill in an Eno hammock.

DAVID BROCKHOFF

XXXXXX, XXXXXXXX

When I was younger, and the concept of cities and their boundaries had not been taught to me yet, my region was my world. Everything that I saw on a daily basis was all I knew. Each drive my family and I would take, whether just into Cincinnati or way down to Florida, existed on a different plane of perspective from what I perceived at home. So, for quite some time, my school, my neighborhood, and my house were the city of Covington, Kentucky, condensing a 14 square mile area into a few measly roads. It wasn't until a few years later that I understood that there existed a whole part of my hometown that I had not even acknowledged as such. With this new discovery came also the realization of the vast differences between the more southern, suburban border where I currently live and the busier metropolitan portion. The picture that I took represents the woods in which a majority of my childhood was spent. But, less profoundly, it shows the disparity of two regions when compared to other parts of Covington that both exist within the same city. Despite differing depending on location, all parts are still unified under one simple, defining name of Covington.

STUART NICHOLAS
XXXXX, XXXXXXX





"...my region was my world."

WHERE I'M FROM

By: Brayden Cunningham

Age: 11

I'm from Hensleys and Johnsons,
I'm from dogs and pit bulls ,
I'm from deciduous trees and bluegrass Kentucky,
I'm from brown squirrels and colored cats,
I'm from pizza and chicken,
I'm from Master Chef and Inside Out,
I'm from football and Christmas,
I'm from Joseph, Miguel, and Tayari,
I'm from playing football and sleeping,
I'm from "Hi" and "Go to your room",
I'm from liking pink and being competitive,
I'm from being in the NFL or becoming a vet,
I'm from John G. Carlisle.

WHERE I'M FROM

By: Tayari Hill

Age: 11

I'm from Dobys and Hills,
I'm from a beagle named Hope and a fluffy rabbit named Lola,
I'm from Covington and flowers blooming in the spring,
I'm from outdoor cats and brown squirrels,
I'm from cheese pizza and chocolate ice cream,
I'm from Teen Titans and Avengers,
I'm from going out of town and having dinner together,
I'm from math and gym,
I'm from Treavon and Joseph,
I'm from eating and playing games,
I'm from "Hi!" and "You're smart",
I'm from being competitive and loving pink,
I'm from playing in the NBA or becoming a chef,
I'm from John G. Carlisle.

WHERE I'M FROM

By: Jaelynn Turner

Age: 9

I'm from Hensleys and Johnsons,
I'm from dogs and birds,
I'm from evergreen trees and wet mud,
I'm from squirrels and cats,
I'm from bananas and chicken,
I'm from Bring it On and Bring it On: All or Nothing,
I'm from having fun and getting together,
I'm from Halloween and Christmas,
I'm from Brooke and Mylek,
I'm from going to school and getting an education,
I'm from "I love you" and "You're sweet",
I'm from being happy and being smart,
I'm from having a big dream,
I'm from John G. Carlisle.

WHERE I'M FROM

By: Kennisha

Age: 11

I'm from Wagoners and McCoys,
I'm from Champ, Fluffy and Dimon,
I'm from Covington and kids playing outside,
I'm from cats and dogs,
I'm from tacos and chicken,
I'm from Girl Meets World and Annie,
I'm from Mario and Monopoly,
I'm from math and gym,
I'm from Makayla and Cheyenne,
I'm from playing basketball and watching TV,
I'm from "You're smart" and "Love you",
I'm from kind and smart,
I'm from owning a pony,
I'm from John G. Carlisle.

WHERE I'M FROM

By: Thomas

Age: 10

I'm from Garcias and Salinas,
I'm from Simba and Lili,
I'm from Wal-Mart and basketball courts,
I'm from birds and dogs,
I'm from burgers and yogurt,
I'm from Regular Show and The Smurfs,
I'm from eating at restaurants and talking at the table,
I'm from Social Studies and BLOCK,
I'm from drawing characters and watching TV,
I'm from "Can I borrow your sharpener?" and "Do your homework",
I'm from dressing the same,
I'm from having a Happy New Year,
I'm from John G. Carlisle.



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